

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 02730 270345Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----044379 272150Z /64

R 261050Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8832

INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 2730

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJ: RTG NARCOTICS POLICE

REF: STATE 16845

1. IN DISCUSSION WITH POLICE MAJOR GENERAL CHAWALIT, DCM AND NARCOTICS ADVISER BRILLIANT TOOK OCCASION TO DISCUSS PRIMIN KRINGSAK'S RECENT REFERENCES TO NEED FOR ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS IN NARCOTICS CONTROL. OFF THE RECORD, CHAWALIT GAVE THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATION AS TO GENESIS PRIMIN'S COMMENTS AS WELL AS HIS OWN PERSONAL VIEW OF BROADER NARCOTICS RELATED ISSUES.

2. ACCORDING TO CHAWALIT, BPP NORTHERN COMMANDER GENERAL WICHAI BRIEFED PRIMIN SHORTLY AFTER COUP ON WICHAI'S NEED FOR THREE PLATOON QUICK STRIKE BPP COMPANY TO MOVE AGAINST SMUGGLING AND DRUG TRAFFICKING. WICHAI, WHO HAS DEVELOPED A VERY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRIMIN, SAID THAT ON OCCASIONS SOME SMALL BPP UNITS COME ACROSS MAJOR CARAVANS WITH 40-50 ARMED MEN. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WICHAI SAID THAT BPP UNITS HAD NO OPTION BUT TO LET CARAVAN PASS AND RADIO BACK FOR ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, CARAVAN WOULD HAVE DISPERSED BY TIME ANY SUPPORT EFFORTS COULD BE MUSTERED.

3. IN ADDITION TO WICHAI'S PITCH, CHAWALIT SAID THAT WITHIN POLICE
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THERE WAS VIEW THAT QUICK STRIKE FORCE WAS ALSO NEEDED IN NORTH-EAST AREA. CHAWALIT NOTED RECENT INTELLIGENCE REPORT INDICATING THAT HEROIN/OPIUM OUTFLOW FROM LAOS MIGHT BE ON INCREASE, POSSIBLY WITH HELP OF LPDR. WHILE THERE IS NO FIRM EVIDENCE WITH REGARD TO THIS, POLICE DID SEE NEED FOR PERHAPS ONE OR TWO PLATOONS FOR STRIKE FORCE IN NE. AS CONSEQUENCE OF ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS CHAWALIT SAID HE WAS DIRECTED BY PRIMIN TO PREPARE A PAPER

FOR USE DURING VISIT OF CODEL WOLFF. CHAWALIT SAID, GIVEN HIS OWN DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. OFFICERS, HE HIMSELF WAS DUBIOUS ABOUT RAISING NEED FOR HELICOPTERS BUT PRIMIN TOLD CHAWALIT HE WAS TOO EASY WITH AMERICANS AND THAT THAI SHOULD BE IN POSITION TO NEGOTIATE FOR ADDITIONAL U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT IN EXCHANGE FOR INCREASED THAI EFFORTS IN THE NARCOTICS FIELD ALONG THE BORDER.

4. CHAWALIT SAID THAT HE COULD NOT AT THIS TIME GIVE AN ANSWER AS TO HOW MANY HELICOPTERS PRIMIN HAD IN MIND. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVED THAT PRIMIN AND SOME OF SENIOR OFFICERS AROUND HIM WERE PROBABLY NOT COMPLETELY AWARE OF STATUS OF HELICOPTERS ALREADY PROVIDED UNDER OUR PROGRAMS AND CONTINUALLY DIFFICULTY IN KEEPING THEM OPERATIONALLY READY. CHAWALIT THOUGHT THAT BEST COURSE OF ACTION AT THIS POINT WOULD BE NOT TO PRESS FOR CLARIFICATION OF PM'S POSITION SINCE HE FELT THIS WOULD ONLY PRECIPITATE UNREALISTIC REQUESTS. HE INDICATED THAT FOR HIS PART, HE BELIEVED IT MORE IMPORTANT FOR THAI TO FIRST DEVELOP THEIR OWN ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACH AND THEN DISCUSS MATERIAL WITH US INCLUDING RADIOS, EQUIPMENT AND POSSIBLY A FEW HELICOPTERS.

5. IN MORE GENERALLY TALKING ABOUT CURRENT RTG NARCOTICS POLICY, CHAWALIT ADOPTED A FAIRLY CAUTIOUS APPROACH. HE SAID THAT SO FAR PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN FINE. HOWEVER, ACTUAL DIRECTION RTG WILL TAKE IN NARCOTICS AREA IS NOT YET CLEAR. HE THOUGHT OVER THE NEXT MONTH, CONFIDENTIAL

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RTG INTENTIONS WOULD BECOME PLAIN WHEN SUCH APPOINTMENTS AS ONCB SECRETARY GENERAL AND COMMANDER OF POLICE NARCOTICS DIVISION WERE DETERMINED.

6. DCM NOTED OUR SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT SUA ACTIVITIES AND ITS ROLE IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. HE ASKED CHAWALIT FOR HIS ASSESSMENT. CHAWALIT INDICATED THAT POLICE HAVE FOUND IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO GET HARD EVIDENCE LINKING SUA LEADERS TO ACTUAL NARCOTICS SHIPMENTS. MOST RECENT CASE WAS RAID ON REFINERY IN CHIANG MAI THIS WEEK (TELEGRAM CHIANG MAI 34). SITE WAS OBVIOUSLY REFINERY AND POSSIBLY SUA LINKED. HOWEVER, ACTUAL MATERIALS FOUND, WHILE USED IN REFINING OPERATION, WERE ALL IN THEMSELVES LEGAL. THE OPIUM DERIVATIVES AND OTHER ILLEGAL COMPONENTS WERE APPARENTLY BROUGHT IN ONLY FOR THE REFINING PROCESS AND THEN IMMEDIATELY MOVED OUT. MORE GENERALLY, CHAWALIT EXPRESSED SOME PESSIMISM ABOUT ANY MAJOR RTG MOVES AGAINST SUA AT THIS TIME. HE SAID IN HIS VIEW THAT SUPREME COMMAND DOES HAVE SOME RELATIONS WITH SUA FOR ITS STRATEGIC PURPOSES AND AT LEAST ONE BPP COLONEL IS PURPORTEDLY CLOSE TO SUA AND USING THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S NAME FREELY, (WHILE CHAWALIT SAID SUPREME COMMAND WE SUSPECT HE MEANT ISOC).

7. IN ADDITION, CHAWALIT SAID THAT NEXT FEW MONTHS MAY BE DIF-

FICULT ONES FOR GOVERNMENT AND FOR PRIMIN. CHAWALIT SAID HE HAD IMPRESSION THAT THERE WAS INCREASING TENSION BETWEEN SOME OF THE "YOUNGER ELEMENTS" AND THE "OLDER MEMBERS" OF THE MILITARY. HE THOUGHT THAT THESE TENSIONS WERE INCREASINGLY DIRECTED AGAINST THE PRIMIN AND INSTIGATED BY SOME OF THE "OLDER ELEMENTS" IN THE MILITARY, INCLUDING ADMIRAL SA-NGAT AND GENERAL YOT. HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BECOME A MORE PRESSING PROBLEM FOR THE PRIMIN, INHIBITING HIS FREEDOM OF ACTION.

WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z

Capture Date: 01 jan 1994

Channel Indicators: n/a

Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Concepts: POLICE FORCES

Control Number: n/a

Copy: SINGLE

Draft Date: 26 jan 1978

Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014

Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW

Disposition Action: RELEASED

Disposition Approved on Date:

Disposition Case Number: n/a

Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW

Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014

Disposition Event:

Disposition History: n/a

Disposition Reason:

Disposition Remarks:

Document Number: 1978BANGKO02730

Document Source: CORE

Document Unique ID: 00

Drafter: n/a

Enclosure: n/a

Executive Order: X4

Errors: N/A

Expiration:

Film Number: D780041-0704

Format: TEL

From: BANGKOK

Handling Restrictions:

Image Path:

ISecure: 1

Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780121/aaaaarqd.tel

Line Count: 124

Litigation Code IDs:

Litigation Codes:

Litigation History:

Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM

Message ID: d94a09e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc

Office: ACTION SS

Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL

Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS

Original Previous Classification: n/a

Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a

Page Count: 3

Previous Channel Indicators: n/a

Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL

Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS

Reference: 78 STATE 16845

Retention: 0

Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED

Review Content Flags:

Review Date: 06 may 2005

Review Event:

Review Exemptions: n/a

Review Media Identifier:

Review Release Date: n/a

Review Release Event: n/a

Review Transfer Date:

Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a

SAS ID: 3712908

Secure: OPEN

Status: NATIVE

Subject: RTG NARCOTICS POLICE

TAGS: SNAR, TH

To: STATE

Type: TE

vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d94a09e0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc

Review Markings:

Sheryl P. Walter

Declassified/Released

US Department of State

EO Systematic Review

20 Mar 2014

Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014